



C. L. "BUTCH" OTTER  
GOVERNOR

April 25, 2009

The Honorable Brad Little  
President of the Senate  
Idaho Senate  
Legislative Annex  
Boise, ID 83720

Dear Mr. President:

I hereby advise you that I am returning to you, without my approval, disapproved and vetoed, the following Senate Bills, to wit:

**S 1175a**

within the time limited by law, the same having arrived in the Office of the Governor at the hour of 2:55 p.m. on April 20, 2009.

Throughout the course of my political career, I have been a strong advocate of grazing on public lands and state management of wildlife. I share the goal of this legislation—to support Idaho's domestic sheep grazing industry, which is an important part of Idaho's heritage and agricultural economy. However, I firmly believe the effect of this legislation will ultimately undermine the industry. Therefore, I am vetoing this bill.

**S 1175**, as amended, will not change federal laws or decisions regarding bighorn sheep viability and grazing allotments on federal lands. Indeed, this legislation may actually weaken our authority to manage wildlife due to challenges from federal agencies or advocacy groups. When defending the interest of all Idahoans, we must be as certain as possible we are safeguarding them without the unintended consequences of damaging exactly what we intended to protect.

I recognize that **S 1175**, as amended, is, at least in part, the result of decisions made by federal courts and the United States Forest Service regarding domestic sheep grazing allotments. The Idaho sheep industry entered into an agreement with the State and Forest Service in 1997 regarding the future transplant of bighorn sheep near federal grazing allotments. Despite the good faith effort of the Idaho sheep industry and the State of Idaho when signing this agreement, federal decision makers are reducing and eliminating grazing allotments on federal land.

I will continue to request that the Forest Service work diligently to reduce the impact of the recent decisions to remove domestic sheep from grazing allotments on the Payette and Nez Perce National Forests. The Forest Service, along with other federal land management agencies, must recognize the value of domestic livestock grazing as part of multiple use activities on public lands.

I have commissioned an advisory group with diverse membership to respond to the bighorn/domestic sheep challenge and to provide direction in the development of a statewide management plan for bighorn sheep. I am committed to seeing that collaborative process to completion. In this way, all stakeholders will participate in crafting a solution.

I will continue to work and am determined in finding a permanent solution for Idaho's domestic sheep industry. By working together, we will arrive at a better outcome for Idaho.

As Always – Idaho, "Esto Perpetua"

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C.L. Butch Otter".  
C.L. "Butch" Otter  
Governor of Idaho